



Winkler Automotive Service Center
401 E. Diamond Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
www.winklerautomotive.com



When George Winkler expanded his location in 1993 to its current location near Granary Row in Gaithersburg, he tried to think of all the little details that would streamline production, protect worker safety and ensure a cleaner shop. He did this by incorporating into the building such features as a heavy duty exhaust system for when the doors are closed during cold weather. He put windows everywhere to provide as much natural light as physically possible for both the customers and workers.

Green Infrastructure - Winkler Service Center has a designated “dirty room” where parts can be cleaned in front of a special air filter which captures the particulates instead of having the workers breathe them. The air filters are cleaned as often as needed for maximum worker safety. For parts cleaning, instead of using chemical based solvents they use an aqueous, or water and detergent based system. The cleaning unit has a skimmer that deposits oil and grease into a bucket that is emptied into a waste oil tank. He says the cost savings over time has well made up for the initial cost of the system’s purchase, and it is so easy to use that all the repair technicians operate it. A routine part of business is recycling antifreeze and waste oil and draining oil filters before disposal.

The waste oil pumping system is also high-tech. All the used motor oil drains into a single tank which is pneumatically pumped into a containment recycling tank. This air operated pneumatic pump prevents all possibility of spillage since the oil doesn’t have to be handled or poured manually. In addition, all five of the hydraulic car lifts use synthetic vegetable oil instead of petroleum, and they never have to be refilled unless a leak occurs. The crew mops the floors daily with biodegradable soap and special mops. They never resort to hosing the floors with water, but if they needed to, the water would funnel into a storm drain inlet which goes directly to an oil-and-grit separator filtration unit located on his property. Both new and scrap tires are locked in a separate room along with new and used motor oil to prevent theft or vandalism – and to prevent them from accumulating water which would create a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Used tires are picked up twice a month by a tire recycler from Baltimore.

Mr. Winkler built with intention. For example, when renovating the old mill on which his shop sits, he saw to it that the overhead light fixtures were positioned in between the work stations to prevent the technicians from dealing with eye strain from shadows. Instead the bays are bright, the floors are very clean, and his shop is laid out by design. His attention to detail pays off with a booming business of some 400 customers every month. Most of the technicians have been with him for 13 to 15 years. He provides ongoing technician training in the latest techniques so they can maintain even the newest model cars, and they stay current with best management practices around the shop.

Winkler Automotive is a model “green” automotive repair shop for the industry. DEP is proud to have them in the Environmental Partners Program!

